

The Window

by

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DESCRIPTION

One patient in the room had the window; the other didn't but wanted it fiercely. Finally, the first patient has the wish granted.

CHARACTERS

- MAN A
- MAN B
- NURSE

SETTING

- Hospital room

NOTE: All characters can be played by men or women. "He" is used for convenience. Also, there is no need to use hospital beds, monitoring equipment, etc.. Chairs, perhaps some sheets, some monitor "blips" over the sound system—anything simple to establish the scene.

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Two men lie in a hospital room. In one wall is a window; opposite the window is a door. MAN A, next to the window, is propped up in bed; his lungs need to drain. MAN B must lie flat on his back as part of his recuperation. A NURSE is in the room, speaking with MAN A.

NURSE

You're doing fine. If you need me, just press this button.

NURSE hands him a long cords with a button on top of it. To MAN B.

NURSE

Your button is there to your right. I'll check in on you both later.

MAN B

Tell me some more of what you see.

MAN A cranes up to look out the window.

MAN A

Well, as you know, it's spring, so the lake is positively beautiful with sunlight. The little wavelets are tipped with diamonds. The boats cut through the water like swans, and the clouds float like the feathers of an angel.

MAN B

And the people?

MAN A

I can see all sorts of people. Families out picnicking, young lovers, old folks on the benches. The leaves are all out, you know.

MAN B

No, I don't know! I'm nailed to this bed, no better than the sheets I'm lying on. All I can see are the ceiling, your profile, and a blank wall. A blank wall. Who can see anything in a blank wall? Oh, I wish I were you, able to look out upon the world. I want to see!

MAN A

It's not so hard.

MAN B

For you! You've got the window! Tell me more.

MAN A

Do you remember yesterday I told you about the little boy who fell into the lake off the jetty? Well, he just walked up with his parents. And you know what they're doing? They're taking him out on the jetty and now they're standing right where he fell in. They're talking with him. He looks scared, but he's listening. Now they're putting him down, and, and, he's reaching out to touch the water.

MAN B

They're very smart—teaching him not to be afraid. It's important to see things as they are.

MAN A

It's important not to be afraid.

MAN B

Tell me more.

MAN A

I can't. I'm tired. I'll tell you more later.

MAN A closes his eyes, falls asleep.

MAN B

(muttering to himself)

I don't see why I can't sit by the window and get some of that pleasure! He paints a good picture—I swear sometimes his words can actually make me smell the blossoms and taste the wind—but it's not the same. It's not the same as seeing it for myself.! I want more. I want more.

MAN B falls silent, and the light in the room dims down to indicate that night has come. Suddenly, MAN A begins to gasp. He gropes for the button but knocks the cord to the floor. MAN B looks up as best he can to see MAN A. He grabs his own cord but hesitates, then does not summon the NURSE. Before long, MAN A's breathing slows and stops. Several beats, and then the lights comes up to indicate day.

NURSE

(cheerily)

Good morning.

(sees MAN A)

Oh my God!

NURSE checks his pulse, then picks up the cord off the floor and presses the button. Another NURSE and a DOCTOR enter; they examine the body while the first NURSE goes to MAN B.

NURSE

I'm afraid he's passed away. Did you notice anything during the night?

MAN B

Not a thing. He died quietly.

The NURSE turns to leave, but MAN B touches her to get her attention.

MAN B

When you have taken him away, could you put my bed over there so that I could look out the window?

NURSE

(quizzically)

You want to look out the window?

MAN B

Yes, yes. To see the lake and the clouds and the people walking around.

NURSE

(laughing)

The only thing you'll see out that window is the blank wall of the building next door.

MAN B

He used to tell me about the things he saw out of that window!

NURSE

Then he was just leading you on. Excuse me, I'll be right back.

The two NURSES and the DOCTOR wheel MAN A's bed out of the room. MAN B is left alone.